

Geronimo at Fort Sam Houston

On 4 September 1886, after a grueling campaign across New Mexico, Arizona and Mexico, Geronimo surrendered to General Nelson Miles in Arizona and was ordered sent to Florida as a prisoner of war. He and thirty-two other Apaches departed Arizona by train on the 8th under the conditions of their surrender. Citizens of Arizona were outraged and demanded Geronimo be returned to stand trial for murder and other crimes committed after his escape from the reservation.

President Cleveland initially wanted to turn Geronimo over to the civil authorities, but Miles insisted that the Apaches be treated as prisoners of war. Cleveland ordered the train stopped at the nearest military post until he could settle the issue. The train stopped in San Antonio on 10 September, and the Apaches were brought to the Quadrangle. They were kept there because the Guardhouse on what is now called the Infantry Post was not completed.

Geronimo was the subject of much commentary in the San Antonio newspapers. He was described as "approximately fifty years of age. He is something like five foot eight inches in height and 9000 feet in meanness ... His face is bare of beard and seamed and furrowed like the side of his own mountains. His hair is long, lank and jet black ... His legs are bowed by their long grip on a saddle and when he stands erect his shoulders droop forward slightly."

Geronimo's adversary described him as "one of the brightest, most resolute, determined looking men that I have ever encountered. He had the clearest, dark, eye I think I have ever seen, unless it was that of General Sherman ... just at the end of the great war."



The San Antonio Light complained, "That this scalp-taker, thieving, bloodthirsty murderous Geronimo and his band might be the recipient of fruits and flowers, be tendered the hospitalities at military headquarters as guests, and be made to feel in his savage old soul that he deserved well of the government whose citizens he had murdered in cold blood?"

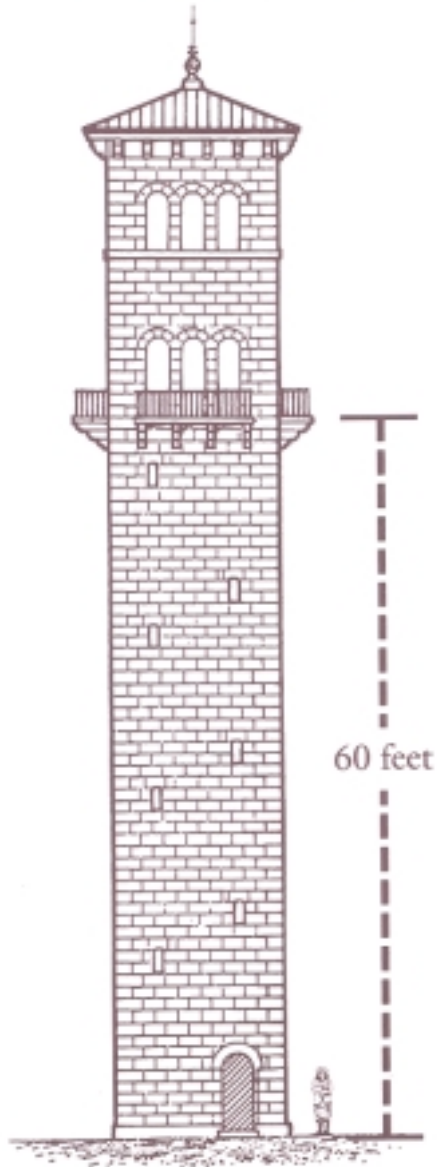
On 19 October 1886, the Secretary of War announced that the government would honor the terms of the surrender to Miles and that

Geronimo and the male Apaches would be sent to Fort Pickens, Florida; the women and children were sent to Fort Marion. They left San Antonio on 22 October.

After two years at Fort Pickens, Geronimo and his group were transferred to Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama. In 1894, they were transferred to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Geronimo died in 1909.

Fact or Fiction?

Geronimo's Leap from the Tower



During Geronimo's stay in the Quadrangle, he was the subject of considerable public interest. One tale which grew from these events concerned the tower. Some soldiers took Geronimo up in the tower to show him the surrounding countryside. The bell in the clock struck the hour and, so the story goes, frightened Geronimo such that he jumped out of the tower. Could this stay be true?*

*Partly true. Geronimo was taken up in the tower, but he feared the soldiers were going to throw him from the tower so he did not go out onto the balcony.

Could Geronimo have survived a jump from the tower?

Distance traveled: 60 Feet

Time of Flight: 1.9 Seconds

Velocity at impact: 62 feet per second or
42 miles per hour

Force at impact: 9,610 foot pounds

What do YOU think?



Geronimo leans against the wall near the northwest gate of the Quadrangle, 1886.

Information Courtesy of:
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